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Two Lovers of Lila

IT WAS hard to decide between them—at least Lila thought so. She found both charming in such opposite, such contrasting ways. It was Max Clarendon, her father's private secretary, who had been sent to bring her home the day she graduated. Like a true woman the opinion of other women influenced her.

"He isn't really handsome," her companion had declared. "He is too angular—and just a little awkward."

"Then there's his hair. He ought to wear that long—or at least as long as Irving wears his—if he is really a poet."

For Max Clarendon had published some really remarkable verse in the leading magazines. "O, he isn't to be compared to your father's partner—Burton Dildine!" decided Lila's bosom friend. "He is so big and broad—he has such a look of bravery. And it's plain to be seen he adores you, Lila!"

But Lila only laughed, and said that all this talk was nonsense. She declared she was a girl who was wise only in the knowledge of how ignorant she really was. And that she was going home to keep house for her father, and that it would be many a year before she left him for—anyone.

Nevertheless, in the year that followed, and the next, she found herself forced to consider the assiduites of her ardent if repressed suitors. For she could not conceal from herself—and perhaps would not if she could—the fact that both men loved her. Though, indeed, they showed it in vastly different ways. One might have fancied that it was only her feminine intuition which made plain to her the fact that Max Clarendon loved her at all. He was occupied with her father's interests. He was consumed by the unwavering passion of his own entrancing literary labors. And he did not pay her the pronounced and open homage of Dildine, who besieged her with invitations and bombarded her with flowers.

But when they met by chance there was a sudden lightning flash in his dreamy eyes, a swift compression of the sensitive, beardless lips, a quick irradiation of countenance which betrayed the ecstatic thrill the mere sight of her had given him. "That secretary of your father's is a queer chap," remarked Dildine one day. Some late verses of Clarendon's had been hugely praised by the critics and he was absurdly irritated thereat. "I don't believe he has the nerve of a cat. We happened to meet the other day just as an accident occurred on Washington street. A ragged little devil of a newsboy slipped, fell under the wheels of a cable car, and was horribly injured. 'Pon my word, Clarendon went white as a ghost. I thought he would have fainted. He's a good bit of a coward, I take it."

A coward! The term rankled in the girl's mind. It unconsciously influenced her, as had the remark of her nearest friend. She had all a woman's admiration of bravery. The great man was to her the man of heroism—of daring.

When that evening Max Clarendon brought her a little gift she was perhaps less pleased by the offering than she would have been before her father's partner had reflected upon his courage. The gift was a slim volume of verse, written by a brilliant and unhappy poet of the Pacific coast—a man whose self-inflicted death was only less sad than his life. She had expressed a desire to read the poems. Max was quite exhilarated at having secured such an exquisite edition.

"You will find many lines as delightful as those I quoted," he assured her. "I know you will appreciate the pathos—the beauty of his work!"

"Thank you," she said, a trifle coldly, "you are good. Pray do not exert yourself again to humor my fancies."

The glow and light went out of his face. He staid but a short time, murmured a few perfunctory words of leave-taking, and went away with a manner which seemed sullen, but was merely the cloak of despair.

And Lila—sitting with slim, idle hands clasped behind her head—remembering the remorse she strove to stifle, the pained look upon his countenance, saw before her as plainly as though in the flesh those two lovers of hers. One so slender, grave, reticent, unassertive—the other so strong, massive, florid, powerful. What a man to have for a life defender—for a pillar of granite upon which to lean—Burton Dildine. No wonder he had spoken of this timid stripling with disdain. Her thoughts recurred to her the next day, as—sitting beside Dildine, in his high rig, behind spirited horses—they whirled southward on Michigan avenue.

"Aren't we going rather fast?" she asked.

He looked down upon her with eyes of tender reproach.

"You," significantly, "are not afraid with me?"

"I am never afraid," she returned, "but I don't like the thought of taking unnecessary risks. Supposing something should break!"

"Even so—you could trust me," he declared, confidently.

His dominating vitality, his self poise, his vain, vivid, impregnable conceit compelled admiration.

The golden afternoon was waning as they passed from the more populous part of the residence portion of the south side. Along the smooth, hard road rang the horses' hoofs. On the left the lake rippled sapphirine and slumbrous. Here and there on either side were sweeps of bronze-brown grass and clover which would nevermore be crimson. Ahead—like the ruins of an old-world city—stretched that graveyard in which are buried more memories than in all the cemeteries of him above the plane of mere intellectuality?

"Give me your flower, lady," said a saucy young voice.

She looked up into a pair of laughing eyes. The owner of the orbs put his head out of the window, and she saw that it was crowned with a wreath of roses. He held a bouquet in his hand.

"No," she said; "I will save it for some poor fellow who hasn't any."

A voice sounded close in her ears as though in answer to her remark.

"They say that the boys in the cars at the rear are complaining that they don't get any attention," it said.

She pushed her way through the crowd, still scanning the faces at the windows. The large white petals of the magnolia had begun to droop.

The time of the stop at Sacramento had almost expired when she reached the last car. Here the crowd had thinned and several officers stood on the depot platform, talking to little knots of people. One was standing with his back to her. She stopped with shortened breath and grew suddenly white.

In a moment the crowd, the cheers, the music and the flags had faded from her senses. She stood in a suburban garden of an eastern city, with the spicy scent of pinks in her nostrils and the breath of the evening breeze on her hot cheeks. A man stood looking down at her with grave, dark eyes.

"Will you send me away without chance of explanation?" he said.

"There is no explanation possible," she replied, hotly. "I never want to see you again."

Then she turned and fled; but behind the mock-orange hedge she watched him as he went sadly away, and all her pride could not keep the tears from brimming over in her eyes.

It had been a foolish lovers' quarrel; but she had married and gone away, and they had not heard from each other for more than three years.

Then the young officer turned, as though in answer to her fixed gaze. He started forward, and held out his hand.

"Gertrude!" he cried.

She looked at him, bewildered; and her eyes dropped beneath the unguarded ardor of his. Both were oblivious of the people and the noise about them. Both had forgotten the years that had separated them. They knew only that they were together again.

"Have you no word for me?" he said. And again his eyes were grave and sad, as on the day he left her in the garden.

"I have brought you this," she replied, holding out to him the drooping magnolia.

"How did you know I would be here?" he asked.

"I did not know," she answered, simply; "but I must have felt it, for I would give it to no one else."

He took it from her hand and looked into her eyes with a searching, passionate gaze. Then he remembered. He stepped back, his face suddenly veiled in a mask.

"How is Jack?" he asked, dully.

"Jack?" she repeated, wonderingly. "Don't you know? Jack has been dead for two years."

A flame of color flashed in his white face. The scream of the whistle rose over the roar of voices and the soldiers on the platform scrambled hastily on the train. The crowd pressed closer to the cars and the girls with autograph albums began to say good-by. But he had moved nearer to her and had taken her hand.

"Trudie!" he said, softly.

Tears sprang to her eyes at the word. She had not heard the pet name for years.

"Gerald," she said, "it was my fault."

He knew to what she referred, and he had no time to waste words.

"It was mine as well," he replied. "I should have written you the explanation when you would not listen. Shall I tell you now?"

She shook her head. The moment of time that was left them was too precious to lose.

"You need never explain," she said; "I know that I was wrong. Tell me what you have done since I saw you last."

"I went to Philadelphia to practice law," he replied. "My uncle made me his partner."

He came closer to her and spoke in vehement tones.

"I am going away," he said.

"Yes," she assented, "you are going to Manila." Her voice broke and a mist blurred her vision. She knew what it meant to him; hardship, danger and a broken career; and she knew also what it would henceforth mean to her.

"Will you marry me if I come back?" he asked.

The train had begun to move and he turned toward it instinctively. But he looked back for her reply. Their eyes met in flashing glance.

"Yes," she whispered.

He wrung her hand; then sprang on the steps of the rear platform of the last car. A fellow officer slapped him on the back and laughed.

"That was a desperate flirtation," he said. But his companion did not hear him.

The people began to follow the slowly moving train. Gertrude went with them, holding always her place at the edge of the crowd. Her eyes were fixed on the platform of the last car, where the young officer stood with his bantering companion. With one hand he was waving his cap to her; with the other he pressed the magnolia against his breast.—Boston Globe.

Duels in Italy.

During the last few weeks duels have caused a perfect slaughter in Italy. As many as four duelists were killed in different towns in one day. During the last year 2,400 duels have been fought in Italy and 480 deaths have resulted. Most of these combats were between army officers, and based on the most trivial pretexts.—N. Y. World.

BUILDING THE PAN-AMERICAN.

Thousands of Men at Work on the Great Structures of the Exposition at Buffalo.

It requires a large force of men to construct the buildings of a great big exposition. The various workers employed in the construction of the Pan-American exposition at Buffalo, N. Y., and in the carrying on of the large business of the exposition company are numerous enough to populate a small city. There are more than 3,000 men engaged in the mechanical and other labor upon the buildings of the exposition and the work upon the grounds, and the number is steadily increasing. They are employed in creating the framework of the buildings, making the staff and placing it in position on the exposition structures, in painting the staff exterior of the buildings, in grading and planting, in digging canals, nursing shrubbery and trees, and in the performance of a thousand and one other details. As they march out of the grounds promptly every afternoon at half-past four o'clock, they constitute a formidable looking army. Besides these, there are hundreds of other employes engaged in the Service building and in the offices of the exposition in the Ellicott Square building, drafting plans, and making working drawings, in carrying out the instructions and ideas of the various heads of departments, in providing for the publicity of the exposition and in transacting the hundreds of different things which must be attended to every day in order that the great enterprise may be carried through to success.

EVERY METAL NEEDS REST.

Constant Use Is Said by Authorities to Lessen the Durability of Iron and Steel.

It may sound strangely to hear persons talk about a "tired steel ax," or a "fatigued iron rail," but that sort of talk is heard along railways and in machine shops and is considered correct, says the New York Herald. "The idea of inanimate metal becoming weary!" may be your thought, but experts familiar with the ways of machinery say that work makes it tired and that it needs rest, as you do.

"What caused the axle to break?" asks the railway superintendent.

"Fatigue of the metal," answers the inspector.

That answer is frequent and often in accordance with the facts. At times an axle breaks or a rail parts or a wheel separates under much less than the usual strain and the most careful examination possible will show no defect or weakness. This leads engineers to charge fatigue of the metal with the result.

Sinews of steel can tire as well as muscles of brawn, and metal that does not have its rest will cease to do its work and may cause great damage. At least so the engineers say; and assert that without rest the affinity of the molecules of the metal for each other becomes weakened until the breaking point is reached. Then comes trouble.

Barbers hold the same opinion, and say that razors must have a rest or else you cannot keep an edge on them, and many men who shave themselves keep two or more razors so as to make a vacation for recuperation possible.

FEW PEOPLE LIVE IN LONDON.

The Night Population of the City Proper Is Decreasing Very Rapidly.

London city proper is losing the little popularity it once enjoyed as a place of residence. In 1861 it had a population of 112,000; to-day it has but a quarter of that number. These figures, of course, represent the night population of the city—those who sleep within the limits of the old city. During the same time the day population—those who do business or perform labor in the city, has increased. In 1866 it was 170,133; in 1891, 301,384. Those who have walked across London bridge about nine o'clock in the morning do not need to be told about the vast stream of humanity which flows cityward at that hour. But it is almost incredible that no fewer than 2,000,000 persons enter the city during a single period of 24 hours. The ascertained number for 1891 was 1,186,094, and the succeeding ten years must have brought the figure up to 2,000,000. One cannot help regretting that the permanent population should have sunk so low. No wonder the numerous and beautiful churches are so empty. The city is now little more than a congestion of warehouses and shops. The change is particularly noticeable in such streets as Bread street, where John Milton was born and the Mermaid tavern once flourished. But those were in the days when the green fields were near and Islington was a country suburb.

BRITISH LIKE CHEAP PAPERS.

The Increasing Popularity of Half-Penny Sheets May Abolish Reading Rooms.

The revolution which the half-penny newspaper has wrought in this country was one of the questions raised at the Library association's meeting held in Bristol recently. Sir Edward Fry gave the presidential address and urged those who have the control of libraries to discourage the frivolous use of books and to stimulate serious effort in the pursuit of knowledge.

During a discussion on the subject of lectures in public libraries, which are at present regulated by act of parliament, it was urged that the time had come to liberate library authorities from the restrictions at present imposed upon them, says the London Mail. The half-penny newspaper topic was broached by Sir William Bailey, of Salford, who said that in these days of cheap half-penny papers reading-rooms might very well be dispensed with in public libraries and their space utilized for lecture purposes. His experience showed that in many cases news rooms were the resort of men who went there with the object of reading nothing but betting intelligence.

SIBERIAN CITIES.

Though Prospering They Nevertheless Seem Dull and Depressing.

Perhaps the most curious feature of all Siberian cities and villages is the quiet of them, says Anna N. Benjamin, in Ainslee's. The American finds it depressing. The places seem half dead, yet they are alive and thriving. Our conception of prosperity in new cities is so associated with the clang of the trolley, the smoke of the factory, the weird writhings of the steam siren, and the bustle of the population, that it is hard for us to realize that prosperity may exist in a place of dead calm.

Vladivistok, Khabarovsk, Blagovestchensk and Irkutsk all present the same features. Blagovestchensk, in the heart of eastern Siberia, on the junction of the Zeya river with the Amur, is, perhaps, the most interesting city. On the central square of the city, where the market is, face two large department stores which for size, beauty of architecture and variety of stock would do credit to any American city. The bank buildings, the museum, and other business and government houses, are of brick or stone. Good schools have been established, so that it is possible for a boy here, as well as in all Siberian cities, to receive a thorough education. In Vladivostok a training school for eastern diplomats turns out graduates accomplished in oriental languages to begin their careers as interpreters or secretaries of legations.

CARRIED GRANDMA'S PICTURE

Prince Henry of Prussia, Who Astonished the Captain of a Trading Ship.

Some time ago when Prince Henry of Prussia, who, as all know, is the grandson of Queen Victoria, was at Hong-Kong, the captain of a British trading steamer sailing out of that port was walking around the graving dock in which the prince's flagship was being brushed up, when he saw an officer standing near the gangway leading from the quay to the ship, and being curious to have a look over the vessel, he saluted with a "Good-morning, sir," and asked if he had any objection to his having a walk through the ship.

"Not at all," replied the officer, "I shall be delighted to escort you round."

After showing him over the different parts of the warship the officer took the captain into his cabin. He offered him a cigar and a glass of wine, and they had quite a friendly chat together. Before leaving the captain happened to glance round the cabin and saw a photo of Victoria. Said he to the officer:

"I notice you have a photograph of the queen of England."

"Yes," said the officer, "I always carry one of my grandmother's pictures with me."

What the captain's feelings were when he found that he had been en camaraderie with the admiral, Prince Henry of Prussia, can be better imagined than described.